

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of broadcasting user controls for streaming digital content from a multiplicity of sources of digital information to a multiplicity of client devices, the method implemented in conjunction with a network of digital computers, at least one of the digital computers comprising a content server upon which the steps of the method are implemented in computer memory and upon at least one computer processor, the method comprising the steps of:
- receiving from a remote director a director instruction, the director instruction comprising an identification of a selected user control;
- extracting, in dependence upon the director instruction, from a store of user controls, the identified selected user control;
- identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction, a data communications program that administers data communications between the content server and a client device;
- encoding through the data communications program, in dependence upon the selected user control, a new HTML document; and
- downloading, through the identified data communications program, the new HTML document to the client device.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the remote director comprises a computer coupled for data communications to the content server, the remote director further comprising a browser.

5 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the director instruction comprises a director URL, the director URL comprising an indication that the director URL is a user control broadcast instruction, the director URL further comprising an identification of the selected user control to be broadcast.

10 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the store of user controls comprises a multiplicity of user control data records each of which represents a single user control and each of which further comprises a user control URL.

15 5. The method of claim 4 wherein each user control data record further comprises a data element that identifies a computer program that gives effect to a user control.

20 6. The method of claim 1 wherein extracting, in dependence upon the director instruction, from a store of user controls, the selected user control, further comprises searching a store of user controls for a user control identified in the director instruction.

25 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the director instruction further comprises a director URL, and extracting the selected user control further comprises searching a store of user controls for a user control identified in the director URL.

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8. The method of claim 1 wherein identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction an identified data communications program that administers data communications with a client device further comprises executing a user control selection routine that itself is identified in the director instruction.
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9. The method of claim 1 wherein the director instruction further comprises a director URL, and wherein identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction, an identified data communications program that administers data communications with a client device further comprises executing a user control selection routine that itself is identified in the director URL.
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10. The method of claim 9 wherein executing a user control selection routine further comprises passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying the selected user control.
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11. The method of claim 9 wherein executing a user control selection routine further comprises passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying a subscription level.
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12. The method of claim 9 wherein executing a user control selection routine further comprises passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying user preferences.
13. The method of claim 9 wherein executing a user control selection routine further comprises passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying user demographics.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein executing a user control selection routine further comprises passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying a client device type.
- 5 15. The method of claim 1 wherein encoding, within the identified data communications program, in dependence upon the selected user control, a new HTML document, further comprises encoding the selected user control as a hyperlink and formulating the new HTML document to include the hyperlink.
- 10 16. The method of claim 1 wherein the new HTML document comprises an old HTML document further including the hyperlink.
- 15 17. The method of claim 1 wherein the old HTML document is the HTML document that was displayed on the client device just before downloading the new HTML document to the client device.
18. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected user control further comprises a duration.
- 20 19. The method of claim 18 further comprising timing the duration of the user control.
- 25 20. The method of claim 19 further comprising restoring to the client device, after timing the duration of the selected user control, an old HTML document comprising an HTML document that was previously displayed on the client device before downloading the new HTML document to the client device.

21. A system for broadcasting user controls for streaming digital content from a multiplicity of sources of digital information to a multiplicity of client devices, the system implemented in conjunction with a network of digital computers, at least one of the digital computers comprising a content server upon which the principal elements of the system are implemented, including computer memory and at least one computer processor, the system comprising:

means for receiving from a remote director a director instruction, the director instruction comprising an identification of a selected user control;

means for extracting, in dependence upon the director instruction, from a store of user controls, the identified selected user control;

means for identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction, a data communications program that administers data communications between the content server and a client device;

means for encoding through the data communications program, in dependence upon the selected user control, a new HTML document; and

means for downloading, through the identified data communication program, the new HTML document to the client device.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the remote director comprises a computer coupled for data communications to the content server, the remote director further comprising a browser.

23. The system of claim 21 wherein the director instruction comprises a director URL, the director URL comprising an indication that the director URL is a user control broadcast instruction, the director URL further comprising an identification of the selected user control to be broadcast.

24. The system of claim 21 wherein the store of user controls comprises a multiplicity of user control data records each of which represents a single user control and each of which further comprises a user control URL.

25. The system of claim 24 wherein each user control data record further comprises a data element that identifies a computer program that gives effect to a user control.

26. The system of claim 21 wherein means for extracting, in dependence upon the director instruction, from a store of user controls, the selected user control, further comprises means for searching a store of user controls for a user control identified in the director instruction.

27. The system of claim 21 wherein the director instruction further comprises a director URL, and means for extracting the selected user control further comprises means for searching a store of user controls for a user control identified in the director URL.

28. The system of claim 21 wherein means for identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction an identified data communications program that administers data communications with a client device further comprises means for executing a user control selection routine that itself is identified in the director instruction.

29. The system of claim 21 wherein the director instruction further comprises a director URL, and wherein means for identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction, an identified data communications program that administers data communications with a client device further comprises means for executing a user control selection routine that itself is identified in the director URL.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying the selected user control.

31. The system of claim 29 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying a subscription level.

32. The system of claim 29 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying user preferences.

33. The system of claim 29 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying user demographics.

34. The system of claim 29 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying a client device type.

35. The system of claim 21 wherein means for encoding, within the identified data communications program, in dependence upon the selected user control, a new HTML document, further comprises means for encoding the selected user control as a hyperlink and means for formulating the new HTML document to include the hyperlink.

36. The system of claim 21 wherein the new HTML document comprises an old HTML document further including the hyperlink.

37. The system of claim 21 wherein the old HTML document is the HTML document that was displayed on the client device just before downloading the new HTML document to the client device.

38. The system of claim 21 wherein the selected user control further comprises a duration.

39. The system of claim 38 further comprising means for timing the duration of the user control.

40. The system of claim 39 further comprising means for restoring to the client device an old HTML document comprising an HTML document that was previously displayed on the client device before a downloading of the new HTML document to the client device.

41. A computer program product for broadcasting user controls for streaming digital content from a multiplicity of sources of digital information to a multiplicity of client devices, the computer program product prepared for implementation in conjunction with a network of digital computers, at least one of the digital computers comprising a content server upon which the principal elements of the computer program product are implemented, including computer memory and at least one computer processor, the computer program product comprising:

a recording medium;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for receiving from a remote director a director instruction, the director instruction comprising an identification of a selected user control;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for extracting, in dependence upon the director instruction, from a store of user controls, the identified selected user control;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction, a data communications program that administers data communications between the content server and a client device;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for encoding through the data communications program, in dependence upon the selected user control, a new HTML document; and

means, recorded on the recording medium, for downloading, through the identified data communication program, the new HTML document to the client device.

5 42. The computer program product of claim 41, wherein the remote director comprises a computer coupled for data communications to the content server, the remote director further comprising a browser.

10 43. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the director instruction comprises a director URL, the director URL comprising an indication that the director URL is a user control broadcast instruction, the director URL further comprising an identification of the selected user control to be broadcast.

15 44. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the store of user controls comprises a multiplicity of user control data records each of which represents a single user control and each of which further comprises a user control URL.

20 45. The computer program product of claim 44 wherein each user control data record further comprises a data element that identifies a computer program that gives effect to a user control.

25 46. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein means for extracting, in dependence upon the director instruction, from a store of user controls, the selected user control, further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for searching a store of user controls for a user control identified in the director instruction.

47. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the director instruction further comprises a director URL, and means for extracting the selected user control further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for searching a store of user controls for a user control identified in the director URL.

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48. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein means for identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction an identified data communications program that administers data communications with a client device further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for executing a user control selection routine that itself is identified in the director instruction.

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49. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the director instruction further comprises a director URL, and wherein means for identifying, in dependence upon the director instruction, an identified data communications program that administers data communications with a client device further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for executing a user control selection routine that itself is identified in the director URL.

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50. The computer program product of claim 49 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying the selected user control.

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51. The computer program product of claim 49 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying a subscription level.

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52. The computer program product of claim 49 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying user preferences.

53. The computer program product of claim 49 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying user demographics.

54. The computer program product of claim 49 wherein means for executing a user control selection routine further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for passing to the user control selection routine a parameter identifying a client device type.

55. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein means for encoding, within the identified data communications program, in dependence upon the selected user control, a new HTML document, further comprises means, recorded on the recording medium, for encoding the selected user control as a hyperlink and means, recorded on the recording medium, for formulating the new HTML document to include the hyperlink.

56. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the new HTML document comprises an old HTML document further including the hyperlink.

57. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the old HTML document is the HTML document that was displayed on the client device just before a downloading of the new HTML document to the client device.

5 58. The computer program product of claim 41 wherein the selected user control further comprises a duration.

59. The computer program product of claim 58 further comprising means, recorded on the recording medium, for timing the duration of the user control.

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60. The computer program product of claim 59 further comprising means, recorded on the recording medium, for restoring to the client device an old HTML document comprising an HTML document that was previously displayed on the client device before a downloading of the new HTML document to the client device.

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